

FEBRUARY 10, 1978

ACADEMY SPECIAL #8 -- THE SOUND MIXER: ARTHUR PIANTADOSI
(INSERTS IN TAPE LIBRARY)

ANNCR: IN APRIL, 1978, THE AMERICAN FILM INDUSTRY IS MARKING THE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE "OSCAR" -- THE GOLDEN STATUETTE AWARDED EACH YEAR FOR OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT IN THE VARIOUS ARTS AND CRAFTS OF FILMMAKING. IN COOPERATION WITH THE ACADEMY OF MOTION PICTURE ARTS AND SCIENCES, VOA IS PRESENTING A SERIES OF SPECIAL INTERVIEWS WITH PROMINENT HOLLYWOOD FILMMAKERS -- ALL ACADEMY AWARD WINNERS. TODAY'S REPORT, THE SOUND MIXER, TELLING STORIES WITH SOUND.

TAPE: CUT ONE -- PIANTADOSI

"MY JOB AS A RE-RECORDING SOUND MIXER IS TO TAKE ALL THE SOUNDS WHICH MIGHT INCLUDE AS MANY AS ONE HUNDRED FIFTY DIFFERENT TRACKS OF SOUND AND PUT THEM ALL TOGETHER INTO SOME ARTISTIC ARRAY, USING ALL THE TECHNICAL FACILITIES WHICH ARE AVAILABLE TODAY."

VOICE: "ONE OF THE MOST CREATIVE, COMPETENT SOUND MEN IN HOLLYWOOD": THAT'S THE INDUSTRY REPUTATION OF ACADEMY AWARD WINNER ARTHUR PIANTADOSI (PEE-ON-TA-DOUGH-SEE).

ARTHUR PIANTADOSI DOES HIS JOB IN A DARKENED ROOM, BEHIND AN INSTRUMENT CONSOLE. AS THE PICTURE FLICKERS ON A SCREEN MR. PIANTADOSI'S HANDS FLY ACROSS THE COMPLICATED LOOKING PANEL, NUDGING A KNOB, TWISTING A DIAL, ADJUSTING A CONTROL SWITCH.

TAPE: CUT TWO -- PIANTADOSI

CUT "IN USE EVERY DAY WE HAVE EQUALIZERS, COMPRESSORS, SUPPRESSORS, DE-ESSERS, REVERB CHAMBERS, ALL KINDS OF EQUALIZERS. AND WHAT WE DO IS MODIFY THE SOUND WE GET, INTO THE SOUND THAT WE WANT."

VOICE: FAR FROM BEING A JOB FOR A TECHNICIAN, MR. PIANTADOSI BELIEVES HIS CRAFT IS A CREATIVE ONE, EVEN ARTISTIC.

TAPE: CUT THREE -- PIANTADOSI

"I THINK IT'S ARTISTIC, IN THAT I USE TECHNICAL MACHINES, SOME OF THEM WHICH I COULD NOT WIRE, MOST OF WHICH I COULD NOT BUILD. BUT I DO KNOW THE FUNCTION OF EVERY ONE. AND I KNOW THE RESULT OF EVERY ONE. SO, IT'S INTERPRETING ART ON THE SCREEN WITH THE MACHINERY AT HAND."

VOICE: MR. PIANTADOSI RECEIVED AN OSCAR FOR HIS WORK ON, "ALL THE PRESIDENT'S MEN," THE FILM ABOUT THE TWO WASHINGTON NEWSPAPER REPORTERS WHO SPEARHEADED THE JOURNALISTIC INVESTIGATION OF THE WATERGATE SCANDAL. MR. PIANTADOSI BELIEVES THAT HIS WORK ON THAT FILM IS A GOOD EXAMPLE OF HOW A SOUND MIXER MUST BE CREATIVE:

TAPE: CUT FOUR -- PIANTADOSI

"I REMEMBER WHEN WE DID, 'ALL THE PRESIDENT'S MEN' THE DIRECTOR ASKED ME TO ORCHESTRATE THE TYPEWRITERS. AND THAT IS EXACTLY THE WAY IT TURNED OUT. HE THOUGHT THAT IT NEEDED MUSIC, BUT IT DIDN'T HAVE MUSIC. SO THE ANSWER WAS, 'DO IT WITH TYPEWRITERS.' AND WE HAD TELETYPES AND TYPEWRITERS AND WHATEVER, AND ORCHESTRATED THEM INTO A BACKGROUND FOR THE SCENES IN 'ALL THE PRESIDENT'S MEN.'"

VOICE: MR. PIANTADOSI SAYS THE SKILLS NECESSARY TO DO HIS JOB WELL ARE AN ARTISTIC FEEL AND COMMON SENSE:

TAPE: CUT FIVE -- PIANTADOSI

"EVERYTHING THAT GOES ON THE SCREEN IS SUBJECTIVE -- AND WITH SOMEWHERE AROUND THIRTY-FIVE TO FORTY (SOUND) TRACKS RUNNING AT THE SAME TIME THE CHOICES MUST BE (MADE) FAST, AND THEY ARE NEVER THE SAME. IT'S LIKE A PERFORMANCE. EVERY TAKE IS LIKE A PERFORMANCE BECAUSE IT'S LIKE AN ORCHESTRA WHICH NEVER PLAYS EXACTLY THE SAME, ONE TIME TO ANOTHER. AND SO YOU ARE OPERATING ALL THE TIME. YOU ARE ADJUSTING ALL THE TIME, FROM ONE TAKE TO ANOTHER TAKE."

VOICE: THE RE-RECORDING AND SOUND MIXING STAGE OF A MOTION PICTURE COME VERY CLOSE TO THE END OF THE PRODUCTION SCHEDULE. OFTEN TIMES BECAUSE OF BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS, THE TIME IS SHORT. DOESN'T THE NEED FOR SPEED RESULT IN LESS THAN HIS BEST EFFORT? YES, SAYS ARTHUR PIANTADOSI, BUT UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES, SECOND BEST IS OFTEN GOOD ENOUGH. ⁰STILL HE OFTEN WISHES

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VOICE:
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THAT DEADLINES COULD BE EXTENDED A DAY, OR EVEN AN HOUR SO
HE COULD POLISH THE FINAL PRODUCT. DOES HE BELIEVE THAT
EXTRA TIME WOULD REALLY MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN THE FILM?

TAPE:

CUT FIVE -- PIANTADOSI

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"FINANCIALLY, PROBABLY NOT. I DON'T KNOW THAT IF REEL THREE IS NOT AS GOOD AS REEL THREE MIGHT BE IN MY EYES, THAT MY AUNT IN BROOKLYN IS NOT GOING TO SEE THE PICTURE BECAUSE OF THAT. BUT THERE ARE ARTISTS IN THE BUSINESS, THERE ARE PEOPLE LIKE SYDNEY POLLACK, RICHARD BROOKS, DIRECTORS OF STATURE WHO REALLY WANT THAT OTHER FEW MINUTES, WHO REALLY WANT THAT OTHER HOUR AND WHO HELP YOU GET IT."

VOICE:

ARTHUR PIANTADOSI BELIEVES THAT HIS JOB CAN BE COMPARED
VERY CLOSELY TO THE TASKS OF THE CAMERAMAN -- EXCEPT THAT
HIS PRODUCT IS FOR THE AUDIENCE'S EARS.

TAPE:

CUT SIX -- PIANTADOSI

"YOU TAKE A CERTAIN GIVEN SET OF CIRCUMSTANCES AND BASICALLY TRY TO ENHANCE, TRY TO TELL THE AUDIENCE EXACTLY WHERE YOU STAND DRAMATICALLY. IT WOULD BE THE SAME AS MY TELLING YOU A STORY: I CAN TELL YOU A STORY WITHOUT YOUR SEEING THE STORY, AND I CAN TELL IT IN SOUND. THAT'S WHAT I HOPE WE'RE DOING, TELLING THE STORY USING WIRES AND MICROPHONES AND SPEAKERS."

VOICE:

ACADEMY AWARD WINNING SOUND MIXER, ARTHUR PIANTADOSI.

ANNCR:

THIS HAS BEEN THE EIGHTH IN A SERIES OF SPECIAL REPORTS ON
CONVERSATIONS WITH AMERICAN FILMMAKERS, ON THE OCCASION
OF THE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF "OSCAR", THE ANNUAL AWARD
OF THE ACADEMY OF MOTION PICTURE ARTS AND SCIENCES.

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